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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 0349  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0404  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 1947  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0741  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0036  
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 0471  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0850

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000032

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OVIP](#) [MR](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT ABDALLAHI TO TRAVEL ABROAD, NAME SPECIAL  
ENVOYS

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 11

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Dennis Hankins for Reasons 1.4 (b and d)

11. (C) President Abdallahi's Chief of Staff, Mohamed Kaber Ould Hammoudi, told Charge that President Abdallahi would be returning to Nouakchott "in a few days" and plans to take a trip abroad after a few days of political and diplomatic consultations in the capital. The President has asked the U.N. to grant him a U.N. travel document rather than travel with his Mauritanian diplomatic passport (which he does not currently have in his possession) that the regime says will be annotated to say "former president." (Comment: UNDP ResRep Maria Ribeiro told Charge January 12 that she had been advised by New York that the U.N. could not assist. The U.N., she understood, only issues U.N. laissez-passes to U.N. staff or refugee travel documents -- neither of which would apply to President Abdallahi. End Comment) Abdallahi will likely travel first to Spain to follow up on unspecified medical checks he had started there before the coup. He plans to travel to the African Union Summit but is still working through Jean Ping to determine whether he will participate as the Mauritanian "Head of State" or as a "guest." His staff is trying to arrange meetings in Paris and in Brussels with the E.U. Recognizing the timing issues related to the U.S. transition, Ould Hammoudi asked that the U.S. consider inviting President Abdallahi for meetings in Washington. If a U.S. trip takes place, he would also likely go to the U.N.

12. (C) Ould Hammoudi said the President and the FNDD are finalizing their strategy for the next several months. Their expectation is that General Aziz is in an increasingly tough spot and will be more vulnerable by March. Ould Hammoudi said that the net result of the regime's "National Dialogue on Democracy" was to generate more opposition rather than support. Despite personal tensions between the President and opposition leader Ahmed Ould Daddah, Ould Hammoudi thought the FNDD would be able to forge an alliance with Ould Daddah's RFD. The Mauritanian Bar Association is, according to Ould Hammoudi, trying to form an umbrella pro-democracy structure that could serve as a common platform for both the FNDD and RFD. He added that several small parties previously allied with the regime are prepared to jump to the FNDD. Aside from political isolation, Ould Hammoudi noted that the financial situation for the regime is increasingly tight in

view of shrinking export revenues, the lack of foreign financial assistance, and heavy spending to maintain support for the coup (Comment: Post is also starting to see signs of this. Mauritanian insiders suggest the regime may be bankrupt before the end of February just as food shortages begin to appear. End Comment). Ould Hammoudi hoped that the AU and EU will take some action against the regime in February to further isolate Aziz. Finally, he hoped the AU PSC would refer Mauritania to the Security Council and that the UNSC would take quick action (Comment: Charge, who worked previously in IO/PSC, cautioned Ould Hammoudi that the Security Council rarely rushes to action on sanctions. President Abdallahi may gain marginally from the political effect of having the Council "seized" of Mauritania -- but concrete actions, if they ever come, could be 18 months away or more. End Comment).

13. (C) Ould Hammoudi said the President was moving forward with naming special envoys to regional groups/regions. The former Mauritanian ambassador to the AU is back in place representing Abdallahi. The President plans to name Sidi Mohamed Ould Amajar to represent him at the U.N. and Yahya Ould Kebd to work France and the Francophonie. With relation to the U.N., Ould Hammoudi asked for U.S. assistance with the Secretariat to have Amajar eventually accepted as the Mauritanian PermRep. Charge indicated that in the politics of the U.N. it might not be best to have the U.S. take the lead. It might prove more effective if African members were to call for Abdallahi to be recognized. If there have been similar situations to this in the past, Post would appreciate

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any procedural advice from IO or US/UN.  
HANKINS